

Topic Detective

Spot introductions that name a clear topic.

6W2.a "Introduce a topic clearly; organize ideas, concepts, and information using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

CLEAR TOPIC

The introduction tells the reader the exact topic. It may also tell what the writing will explain, describe, or compare.

Coral reefs shelter many ocean animals.

UNCLEAR TOPIC

The introduction does not name the exact topic. The reader cannot tell what the writing will be about.

Perhaps there is more to discover.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

Part 1: Circle CLEAR or UNCLEAR for each introduction; Part 2: Choose two items and explain how you knew which category each one belonged in.

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. This article explains how drought affects local farms. | <input type="button" value="CLEAR"/> | <input type="button" value="UNCLEAR"/> |
| 2. In this report, you will learn why recycling electronics matters. | <input type="button" value="CLEAR"/> | <input type="button" value="UNCLEAR"/> |
| 3. It is an important issue for everyone. | <input type="button" value="CLEAR"/> | <input type="button" value="UNCLEAR"/> |
| 4. This essay describes the steps in making maple syrup. | <input type="button" value="CLEAR"/> | <input type="button" value="UNCLEAR"/> |
| 5. People have many opinions about it. | <input type="button" value="CLEAR"/> | <input type="button" value="UNCLEAR"/> |
| 6. The details are surprising. | <input type="button" value="CLEAR"/> | <input type="button" value="UNCLEAR"/> |
| 7. This report compares school lunches in two countries. | <input type="button" value="CLEAR"/> | <input type="button" value="UNCLEAR"/> |
| 8. This article explains how bats use echolocation to find food. | <input type="button" value="CLEAR"/> | <input type="button" value="UNCLEAR"/> |

2

PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

3

MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new introduction with a clear topic and one new introduction with an unclear topic.

CLEAR _____

UNCLEAR _____

CHALLENGE

Write a two-sentence introduction that clearly names a topic in the first sentence and tells how you will organize the ideas in the second sentence.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	This article explains how drought affects local farms.	CLEAR	It names drought and local farms as the topic.
2	In this report, you will learn why recycling electronics matters.	CLEAR	It clearly names recycling electronics as the topic.
3	It is an important issue for everyone.	UNCLEAR	The word "it" does not identify the topic.
4	This essay describes the steps in making maple syrup.	CLEAR	It names making maple syrup as the topic.
5	People have many opinions about it.	UNCLEAR	The word "it" does not tell the reader what people are discussing.
6	The details are surprising.	UNCLEAR	It does not name any topic.
7	This report compares school lunches in two countries.	CLEAR	It names school lunches in two countries as the topic.
8	This article explains how bats use echolocation to find food.	CLEAR	It clearly names bats, echolocation, and finding food.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **CLEAR:** This report explains why volcanoes erupt.
- **UNCLEAR:** This deserves attention.

Challenge: This report explains how city trees cool neighborhoods. First, it describes shade, and then it explains how leaves release water vapor.

Accept CLEAR responses only when the sentence names a specific topic. For Part 2, students should point to the topic words or explain that no topic is named.